

TESTIMONY OF PATRICIA BRYSON—COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Thursday, February 10, 2011
SB 9

My name is Patricia Bryson. I'm here to address Proposed Bill No. 9, "An Act Concerning Medicaid Eligibility, to assist Medicaid clients by increasing the Medicaid income eligibility level."

First, I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak before this committee.

What do you do when you're on spend down?? Just try to stay well because you cannot afford to get sick? Stop taking your psych meds because those are the most expensive, don't go to the doctors, and go to the emergency room because they can't turn you down? See if someone else takes the same meds you do and make a deal to share. These were the answers that are on the street.

I went down to the Department of Social Services because I could not get any one on the phone after several attempts. I wanted to understand what was going on with my meds and dental work being put on hold. I certainly could not afford to pay out of pocket. They said there is a formula that is used and this was the result, and there was nothing that could be done on their end. I went to Bridge House in my hometown of Bridgeport and talked about my situation and found out there *was* a way. I would have to go to work for at least 4 hours a week for at least two paychecks, and spend down would go away for the working disabled. Imagine that, being disabled and cannot get your meds or dental services unless, no matter how you felt physically or mentally, get a job of some kind. Reasonable—no—but necessary for my mental and physical health. See, I am insulin dependent, have episodes of depression and anxiety, COPD, high blood pressure with arthritis in my neck, shoulders and both knees. All of which I take medication for. Bridge House helped find me a training position through their program there that accepted me for a couple of hours a week and worked with me when I wasn't feeling well. I continued to apply for these positions when spenddown was imminent. But each time there's not a guarantee that there will be a position open for me. Change the formula for spenddown, because the first set of possibilities are what most people live with, always in a state of emergency. Thank you.